HARAMBEE FLAME

a publication of the harambee afrikan cultural organization

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WHICH DIRECTION IN '84

On the evening of September 17th., the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization held its annual symposium, the theme for which was "which direction in '84." This program was put together in order to facilitate discussion of the question of what we African folks in the U.S. should do with respect to the upcoming presidential election.

Following recitation of the H.A.C.O. creed, presentation of certificates of appreciation, the awarding of a H.A.C.O. t-shirt to Ernie Chambers(accepted for him by Buddy Hogan) for his consistent dedication to African people, and an explanation of the evening's program, the discussion was begun.

Our panelists--Donna Polk, a leader of the Jesse Jackson campaign effort in Lincoln; Matthew Stelly, sociologist and director of the Malone Community Center; Pat Carpenter, an organizer for the Jackson campaign in Omaha; and Darwin Robinson, a member of H.A.C.O.--started things off by responding to the question of what is the climate for African people in this political season and what should our stance be in relation to the presidential race. During these opening remarks and during the body of the program, the three most clearly articulated positions expressed by our panelists, members, and guests were: that we should register and vote, but not for president because neither of the two Establishment candidates has anything of value to offer us; that we should write in the name of Jesse Jackson on the presidential ballot because his ideas represent our interests; that we should vote for Mondale (Contd. on p. 3)

GUEST EDITORIAL by

Majani Marefu (Philadelphia, PA.)

OUR OWN PROBLEM & THEIR PROBLEM

Black people in 1984 in the USA are still struggling against the same white racism that our ancestors faced in 1884, 1784, and before. Perhaps if we would stop and let that really sink in we would also realize something else. We would realize that, while we were proud and emotionally aroused by Jesse's speech at the Democratic Convention, that it was the same message to the same people, unfortunately yielding the same response; the same message that came from Frederick Douglass in the mid 1800's on down through David Walker, W.E.B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, Carter G. Woodson, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Fannie Lou Hamer in 1964, Stokely Carmichael, and so forth. The same message: that America's main problem is still the color line or white racism.

(The message is)that white racism is a vicious form of hate and violence; that this form of hate and violence, as Jesse so clearly stated, grows from ignorance; that this ignorance denies the American adult majority and their children the open conscience needed for being truly receptive to sisterhood, brotherhood, and peoplehood; that this ignorance has been and still is perpetuated and passed along from one generation to another, an act in which adults practice mental violence on their won children; that this ignorance is most thoroughly and pervasively perpetuated by way of the American educational system; that, while this nation is becoming more and more concerned in education about teaching the mechanics of reading, writing, and arithmetic, it is not properly concerned about the content of that

GUEST EDITORIAL(cont.)

reading and writing.

This nation's educational system still institutionalizes ignorance when it presents Greco-Roman civilization as the basis of western european civilization while omitting that the Greeks themselves admitted that they got their civilization from Africa. The system institutionalizes ignorance when it continues to project the Columbuses, Captain Cooks, et al as great "discoverers" instead of the pirates and destroyers that they were; when it teaches the glory of the pilgrims and the pioneers and supresses the murderous and brutal conquest they carried out to wrest this land from the original inhabitants(labeled as "red savages"); when it continues to distort early U.S. imperialism in Mexico, Haiti, Hawaii, Africa, China, the Phillipines, etc. (the very foundation for present-day U.S. adventurism in South America, the Caribbean, Asia, Africa, and elsewhere.

The educational system institutionalizes this ginorance when it rationalizes putting non-white American citizens into concentration camps during World War II while allowing white aliens their freedom; when it projects a "pull-yourself-up-by-your-boot-strap" philosophy while neglecting to admit that the very base of the nation's wealth and work ethic was the murder, blood, exploitation, and sweat of enslaved Black people--the captive sons and daughters of the high civilizations of Africa; when it still teaches our children this ignorance, and more, perpetuates hate and violence and, concommitantly, white superiority and racism.

The sad fact is that the American adult majority has trained itself and its children to have closed minds and consciences regarding racial equality and the issues pertaining to it. This says something about America that diminishes it. It says that, as individuals and as a nation, we are not really the free of "the free world." For, as Jesse says, "it is the truth that will set us all free." But white American adults seem to lack the courage to teach and pass on the truth to their very own children.

This is indeed the American tragedy. This is indeed THE PROBLEM. This is the damnable problem that white America has. Non-white America can speak to white America about this problem but cannot solve it for them. Unfortunately, Blacks placed in high positions in education--such as superintendents, heads of teachers' unions, members of education-evaluation commissions, etc.--are not even speaking of the problem as outlined above or as so brilliantly depicted in the 1930's by Carter G. Woodson.

So we must recognize all the above and then move to place greater emphasis on solving our own problems, one of the most serious being that we Afrikan-Americans have not set up our own institutions in our own communities for providing for our own survival and advancement. For instance, we do not have our institution where our own Black children can go, on a day-by-day, hour-by-hour basis, to learn to truly understand the nature of the oppression that they/we still face and thus develop the correct skills and attitudes for overcoming it.

As adults, we have provided ourselves with no such institution for regular community education and learning regarding this oppression and solutions to it. We still depend on crisis rallies, meetings and marches, brief rap sessions on our jobs and in bars, at parties, in hair shops, on street corners, etc. for reacting to and complaining about.

We still seem to have high hopes that white racis institutions--political, religious, educational, informational, etc.--will provide the messiah that will somehow save us. In truth, we must put a great deal more effort into the task of building our own institutions, for the saving of ourselves and our children, as we continue to put pressure on white institutions. This will take work and faith in ourselves. Let's get to work!

From other sources

AZANIA(South Africa)---"...The protests that have mushroomed since last month's restricted "election" are more intense than anything the country has experienced since the 1976-77 Soweto uprising, and so is the repression. Police bullets have killed over 40 by official count(the actual figure is probably much higher), but the actions--including gasoline bomb counterattacks--have only grown larger and more numerous....

"The catalyst for this upsurge of mass resistance to apartheid was the white governmen's 'reform' creating a new tricameral parliament, purporting to extend limited representation to people of mixed race and Indian origin, but not to blacks. The measure also established a new 'executive presidency' giving Botha more concentrated dictatorial powers than he had as prime minister...."

--from page 18 of the September 26 edition of THE GUARDIAN

AFRICAN PEOPLE IN THE U.S. IN TROUBLE

"...one-third of black people are at or below the poverty level, the median income for Blacks is 58% that of whites, one third of adults wanting work can't find it, two out of three teenagers are in the same situation, and 47.6% of all Blacks 18 and younger live in poverty..."

--from page 26 of THE HAMMER(Summer '84), a review of the '84 Urban League "State of Black America"

WHICH DIRECTION IN '84

in order to get Reagan out of office.

Once folks got warmed up, the program was marked by lively debate centered on the ideological issue of whether the salvation of African people in this country lies in better use of The System or in our rejection of it and creation of our own systems and institutions. Excellent coverage of our symposium was provided on the following Sunday by Ben Gray's weekly television program, "Kaleidoscope."

LITERATURE RECEIVED

A GUIDE TO PAN-AFRIKAN CULTURE & HISTORY

-by Majani Marefu & prepared by Jamia Consultants

"History and understanding of one's true culture can serve a variety of purposes. One of these is that of adding to the survival and constructive growth of a people and, thereby, the world. Thus we must try to learn correct lessons from a correct history and culture in order to make correct survival choices and decisions. This guide seeks to aid in that effort. It presents, in the form of a brief outline, a chronological isting of Pan-Afrikan history and culture from 5.5 million years ago to 1492 and charts events since that time. It is hoped that this brief outline will encourage the reader to go to your Black bookstore and library and explore these facts in depth..."(from the introduction to the GUIDE)

A GUIDE TO PAN AFRIKAN CULTURE & HISTORY, being only 31 pages in length, is full of provocative information and analyses and serves as a very appropriate vehicle for stimulation of those of us who have little knowledge of African history and culture, want to learn more, but may not have the patience to wade through books of several hundred pages in length. This guide will, if you have any curiosity at all, make you want to learn more.

THE ENDANGERED BLACK FAMILY

-by Nathan Hare, Ph.D. & Julia Hare, M.M.E.D. & published by Black Think Tank

In THE ENDANGERED BLACK FAMILY, Nathan and Julia Hare, the husband-and-wife team who edit "Black Male/Female Relationships," cover a wide spectrum of topics related to African family life in the U.S. and the many forces working against our efforts to have harmony among ourselves and, indeed, to survive. If you are squeamish about discussion of controversial subjects, you will NOT want to read this book!

From other sources

FOOD

(From the BLACK AFRICA COOK BOOK by Monica Bayley & Alain LeFoll)

Ghana Stew 2 pounds beef stew meat, cubed
6 medium-size onions, sliced
4 fresh tomatoes, chopped
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1½ teaspoons salt
4 tablespoons cooking oil
2 tablespoons flour
1 teaspoon grated nutmeg
Cornmeal dumplings

Put meat in heavy stew pot. Sprinkle with salt. Add 1 sliced onion. Cover and cook over high heat for 10 minutes. Turn down heat and simmer for 1 hour. Put oil into frying pan and saute remaining onions until yellow. Remove meat cubes from stew pot. Add pepper and nutmeg to flour and roll cubes in the seasoned flour. Saute meat until brown. Put all ingredients into stew pot. Add tomatoes. Add water to cover. Simmer for 1 more hour. During last 15 minutes add dumplings.

Cornmeal dumplings 1 cup cornmeal
½ cup flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
2 eggs, beaten
½ cup milk
2 tablespoons melted butter
½ cup chopped parsley

Sift together corn meal, flour, baking powder and salt. Beat the eggs and add milk. Combine egg mixture and dry mixture. Stir in melted butter. Add parsley. Drop one tablespoonful at a time on top of boiling stew. Cover pot tightly and simmer for 15 minutes. Serve at once. Makes 8 dumplings.

Banana Crepes 4 ripe bananas, peeled & chopped
2 eggs, separated
4 tablespoons flour
1 teaspoon lemon juice
2 teaspoons sugar
Butter or oil for frying
Powdered sugar for topping
Lemon juice for topping

Mash bananas and stir until smooth. Beat egg yolks and add flour and lemon juice. Add to bananas and stir well. Beat egg whites until stiff. Fold in sugar. Add to banana mixture. Heat about a teaspoonful of butter or oil in a frying pan until hot. Drop crepe mixture by the tablespoonful into the hot pan and fry until brown on both sides, turning carefully with a spatula (the crepes are very dilicate and should be no more than 3 inches in diameter for easy turning). Drain on paper towels. Sprinkle with powdered sugar and drops of lemon juice. Serve immediately. Makes about 2 dozen.

Avocado Salad 1 ripe avocado
juice of 1 lime
1 large ripe tomato, cut into wedges
lettuce leaves

Dressing ¼ cup vinegar
¼ cup olive oil
¼ teaspoon pepper

Peel avocado, cut into slices and marinate in lime juice for half an hour. Remove slices. Make individual salads with lettuce leaves topped with avocado slices and tomato wedges. Put a few spoonsful of dressing on each salad.

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According to the introduction to BLACK AFRICA COOK BOOK, these recipes come from the middle of the African continent, inclusive of Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ghana, and Senegal; and some of the ingredients have been substituted for to suit more easily the tastes of American-born Africans.

P.A.C. SIX

Six members of the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania were sentenced to life in 1963. They were the first political activists to be sentenced to life imprisonment and were the first to be sent to the infamous Robben Island. Today, 20 years later, they are still languishing on Robben Island.

However, in the past 20 years the international community paid little or no attention to these six. The six members of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania serving life imprisonment are:

Samuel Chibane was charged in 1963 with inciting Africans to attack government installations, stealing bombs from a government depot and sabotage. He was born and brought up in Pretoria. He became involved with the PAC as a student at Wilberforce Institute in Evaton, near Sharpeville--the scene of the March 21, 1960 Sharpeville Massacre. He was 37 years old at the time and was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Dimake Malepe was charged with 10 others in the Pretoria Supreme Court in 1963 with conspiracy, organizing armed resistance and with being a member of the Pan-Africanist Congress. He was branch Chairman of the PAC at Hebron Training Institute. Malepe was 35 and convicted in June 1963 to life imprisonment.

Jeff Masemola was charged with 14 others in the Pretoria Supreme Court in June 1963 with conspiracy to commit sabotage. It was alleged that, at a meeting in Atteridgeville, near Pretoria, plans were made to attack the oppressors. Masemola was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment and since 1968 he has been kept in solidarity confinement in the segregated cells, away from the other prisoner. He is now 69.

Isaac Mthimunye, age 37 at the time, was charged in 1963 with belonging to and organizing PAC/POQO(the armed wing of PAC) activities. He was also charged for recruiting members to undergo military training. In another trial, also in 1963, he was charged with assaulting guards at a depot near Pretoria with intent to steal dynamite. He was arrested in 1963 after a country-wide search, charged and sentenced to life imprisonment. While serving his term on Robben Island, he was brought to give evidence in the trial of the Vaal Regional Chairman, the late David Sibeko, but refused to testify when brought to the witness box. He is from Pretoria and was expelled from Sitla Secondary School for leading a student demonstration. He then became involved with the PAC and, in 1962, was elected Northern Transvaal Chairman.

John Nkosi, aged 35, was charged with 14 others in the Pretoria Supreme Court in June 1963 with conspiracy to commit sabotage. He was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Philemon Tefu, aged 39, was charged in 1963 for inciting Africans to attack government installations and stealing bombs from a government arsenal. He was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment in June 1963.

In June 1979 the longest political trial in the history of apartheid South Africa was concluded with the conviction and sentencing of 18 members of the PAC for activities dating back to 1963. Among the charges were "organizing" and "predicting" the 1976 Soweto uprisings. The PAC members were sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from 5 to 15 years.

Since the PAC SIX are the longest serving political prisoners on Robben Island, the PAC of Azania calls upon the international community, fraternal organizations, governments, mass and professional organizations, churches, support groups and justice-minded peoples the world over to widely publicize their inhuman detention and to demand for their immediate and unconditional release--together with all other political prisoners and detainees.

--Ahmed Gora Ebrahim(Permanent Observer Representative of PAC of Azania to the U.N.)

POETRY

Ode to Joe Blow

You sit alone at the edge
of the bar
talking to yourself
telling yourself
what you could've been
what you should've been
what you wanted to be
   but you aint
you never got the chance
   with a beer
   in one hand
and a broken dream
in the other

You face tomorrow
by chasing away today
drowning your sorrows
in a bottle of booze
and a couple of side blues
   but when the record
         stops
   you lose again
         12 a.m.
you leave the bar
headed home
   cockroaches applaud
   as you staggle
   down dark alleys
   shouting obscenities
   at the world
         9 a.m.
Monday morning
you rise, shine
and rush to work
your head throbs with pain
as your boss complains about
   how hard it is to
find good help nowdays
   "Niggers don't want to
   work no more for nothing
         Wonder Why"
I don't know boss
         you reply
         he laughs
         and laughs
         and laughs
until anger swells
your heart bursts
Your teeth grit and fists clench
you scream like a Masai Warrior
ready for battle
but when the whistle blows
   you punch the clock
      and slink away.

Study Yourself

this is a poem
without emotion
without feelings
without thought
(without action)
void of all the things
that make a poem a poem

this is not a piece of
living/functional art
nor is it a poem
that spurs one toward
a collective consciousness
on the contrary
it is cold and impersonal rhetoric
written in the western
art-for-art sake tradition
if you like this poem
study yourself
there may be something
seriously wrong with you.

--Charlie E. Braxton
(McComb, Mississippi)

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THE ENDANGERED BLACK FAMILY: Coping With The Unisexualization and Coming Extinction of the Black Race can be ordered from: Black Think Tank
1801 Bush St.
San Francisco, CA.
94109

A GUIDE TO PAN AFRIKAN CULTURE AND HISTORY can be ordered from:

Jamia Consultants Coop
Box 236
Philadelphia, PA.
19050

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